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224 [721] *Regulation of the tribal hunt.*—It can not be said that there were many special regulations during the tribal hunt. The rules applying to the regulation of war parties held here too. (For a description of these, see p. 156.)

Individuals were strictly prohibited from taking the initiative except by permission. For instance, a man was not allowed to proceed beyond a certain point, or shoot before a certain time; in short, not to do anything by which he might endanger his own life, the safety of his companions, or the success of the hunt, such as scaring away the animals or causing them to stampede.

625 224 614 484 It is during the tribal hunts that the power of the Bear clan is at its height. For this reason it may perhaps be most appropriate to include here a description* of these powers, although this really belongs in the section on Social Organization:

Whenever the Winnebago are on their tribal hunt or whenever they move from one place to another, the soldiers (i. e., the Bear people) take the lead. Whenever they decide to stop at some place, the leader of the Bear people places his stick in the ground and the other soldiers do the same. The line of sticks is a slanting one. The main tribe follows behind at some distance and always camps a little behind them. None of the members of the tribe dare pass ahead of these sticks. If, for instance, during the fall move the tribe were passing through a country in which much game abounded, and if after the tribe had stopped at a certain place anyone should take it upon himself to go ahead and kill game on his own initiative, and he was discovered, the soldiers would go to his camp and burn it and everything it contained, destroy any supplies he had, and break his dishes. They would spare only his life and the lives of his family. If he resisted he would get a severe whipping. If even after that he resisted them and took his gun and attempted to shoot, the soldiers would not do anything but stand ready. But the moment he made an attempt to shoot, they would kill him and nothing would be said of the matter, for they would be putting into effect the law of the tribe. If, on the other hand, the man submitted to the action of the soldiers and apologized they would make him a better lodge and would give him more and better things than those they had taken away.

[626]

Fishing and Agriculture

226 *Fishing.*—In former times fishing seems to have been done exclusively by spearing or by shooting. The spear (*woca'*) consisted of a long stick provided with a bone or a horn point. Spearing was done preferably at night with the aid of torches made of pine pitch. In shooting fish a long arrowlike stick (*ma°auzisirdni*) with a pointed end, whittled and frayed at the base like the ceremonial staff of the Bear clan, was discharged from an ordinary bow.

227 The most commonly used trap for fishing was a triangular weir loaded with a stone at its base and placed at the head of a waterfall caused by artificial damming of a stream.

784 226 Very few fish were taboo, the principal ones being the dogfish and the eel.

* By Thunder Cloud.

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CHAPTER VI

WARFARE AND THE COUNCIL LODGE

Warfare

721 [183] War was one of the most important elements in the life of the Winnebago. The life of the warrior was the ideal toward which all men strove. It not only satisfied certain emotional needs but it [554] was so inextricably interwoven with social standing in the community and with individual prestige that Winnebago life is unthinkable without it. It is not surprising, then, that the prayer for [782] success on the warpath was the most important prayer that men offered up to the spirits and that it was reechoed in almost all the ceremonies. (Pls. 43, 44, 45.)

An element of culture fraught with so much significance to the individual and the social group was bound to be surrounded by innumerable customs, regulations, and restrictions. It was a life that was at stake every time an individual went on the warpath, and remembering the value of each life to a small community, it is not to be wondered at if there is a definite attempt on the part of the social group to restrict individual activity in this particular regard. An individual might go on the warpath either alone or in company with a few people, but the community, in the person of the chief, insisted that he show some warrant for his action. If no warrant of [626] any kind could be given, he subjected himself to the only restrictive measures the chief and the community could adopt, disapproval, jeers, and temporary loss of social standing and prestige. So much, as far as his own person was concerned. If his action jeopardized the life or lives of other members of the tribe he had then to face [636] the relatives of these people, just as any individual who had committed some wrong. It is hardly likely that many men would willingly run any risks of unnecessarily antagonizing their fellow tribesmen when the proper means of preparing for the warpath was open to all. A careful perusal of the system of education given on page 166 makes it clear that a sufficiently large number of methods for obtaining consent to lead a party were given, and that it was possible for every male individual to go on the warpath frequently if he so desired. Certain requirements were, however, necessary. It was not left to each individual to decide for himself [622] whether he possessed these, but the final decision always lay in the hands of the chief.

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the warpath.[7] So they say. If you do not become an individual warranted to lead a war party, yet mistaking yourself for one although really an ordinary warrior, you "throw away a man," your act will be considered most disgraceful. A mourner might harm you in revenge for the fact that you have caused him to mourn, and burn you with embers. Your people will all be sad, both on account of your disgrace and on account of the pain inflicted upon you.

My son, not with the blessing of one of the spirits merely, nor with the blessing of twenty, for that matter, can you go on the warpath. You must have the blessing of all the spirits above the earth, and of all those on the earth, and of all those who are pierced through the earth;[8] of all those under the earth; of all those who are under the water; of all those that are on the sides of the earth, i. e., all the four winds; of the Disease-giver;[9] of the Sun; of the Daylight;[10] of the Moon; of the Earth; and of all those who are in control of war powers—with the blessings of all these deities must you be provided before you can lead a successful war party.

My son, if you cast off dress[11] men will be benefited by your deeds. You will be an aid to all your people. If your people honor you, it will be good. And they will like you even the more if you obtain a

[7] Among the Winnebago any individual who has been blessed with the necessary powers to lead a warpath may do so, but it is absolutely essential that his blessing directing him be of such a nature that every possible contingency is included therein. Such complete blessings are, of course, not common nor can they be obtained except through unusual exertions. If you are blessed with just the ordinary or incomplete war powers and you nevertheless undertake to lead a war party, you may either be defeated or perhaps only partially successful, and, what is worse, you may lose some of the warriors who started with you. Your recklessness has thus caused the death of some of your fellow tribesmen. It is understood that every warrior before starting on the warpath turn his "blessing" over to the chief of the tribe for examination, and if the chief considers it complete the warrior is not held responsible for the lack of success or loss of life. If the chief does not consider an individual's blessing sufficient to justify the object he has in view and forbids the warrior to go, and if the latter nevertheless goes, or granted the case he does not even submit his "blessing" to the chief for scrutiny, and speaks out, then he is held directly responsible for any mishap on the warpath. The relatives of any individual thus killed may hold the war leader responsible and demand compensation; or, as is indicated by B a few lines later, a mourner (i. e., one who has been placed in mourning by the criminal foolhardiness of the war leader) might attack, perhaps kill him, without being held guilty of any crime. It must of course be understood that such occurrences would seldom take place. We must, however, remember throughout these "teachings" that one of the objects of the old men was to draw the most alluring pictures of the rewards that would fall to the lot of those who followed in the footsteps of their ancestors, and, on the other hand, to draw the most lurid pictures of the wretchedness that befell those who deviated, no matter in what details, from the customs sanctioned by age.

[8] According to the Winnebago creation myth, when Earthmaker, the creator of the earth, first came to consciousness and began creating life the earth on which we were to live was in continual motion, and nothing that the former could do seemed to be able to stop it. From above he threw down grass, trees, etc., but all was of no avail. Finally he hit upon the happy expedient of pinning the earth down at the four corners by means of four enormous snakes, or, as some say, by means of four mythical animals known as water spirits. It is to these that the old man is referring here. According to the story, even these were of no avail, and it was only when he finally placed four mythical beings known as "Island Weights" at the four corners that our planet stopped spinning. These "Island Weights" seem to be identical with the spirits of the four cardinal points, but they are not to be confused with the four winds mentioned later.

[9] A deity conceived of as dealing out life-giving powers from one half of his body and death-giving powers from the other half. He is also supposed to disseminate disease. Disease-giver is a literal translation of the Winnebago word, but this probably does not convey the exact meaning. There seems to be no parallel to this peculiar deity among the other Siouan tribes or among the Algonquins.

[10] Daylight or light is conceived of as something different and distinct from the sun.

[11] That is, if you give away things frequently, especially to poor people.

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From these facts it is quite clear that, as far as the Thunderbird clan is concerned, the prevailing belief as to the relation of the members of the clan to the clan ancestor is but feebly substantiated by the origin myths. 614 773 114

As mentioned before, the chief of the tribe was selected from the Thunderbird clan, although the selection was apparently restricted to certain families. The functions of the chief of the tribe were connected with peace. He could not lead a war party, although, according to some, he could accompany one. His lodge stood either in the center of the village or at the south end, according to which of the two descriptions one cares to accept, and contained a sacred fireplace, around which only members of the Thunderbird clan could sit. This lodge was an asylum for all wrongdoers. No one could be killed there, and a prisoner who succeeded in making his escape to it was spared. Even a dog destined for a sacrifice at the war-bundle feast was freed if he took refuge in it. The Thunderbird chief always acted as intercessor between wrongdoers and their avengers. Even in so extreme a case as the murder of a clansman, he would always attempt a reconciliation by which the life of the murderer might be spared. If necessary, the chief would mortify himself, and with skewers inserted in his back have himself led through the village to the home of the nearest kinspeople of the murdered person. 614 622 [778] [682 304]

The chief seems to have had some other miscellaneous functions, the most important of which was, perhaps, his right to prevent an unauthorized war party to depart from the village. If he, as an older man and guardian of peace and the best interests of the tribe, felt that a war party was taking too many risks, he would take his pipe and place it across the path of the one contemplating an unwarranted expedition and thus signify his disapproval. If then the war party chose to go, any mishap was directly chargeable to the leader who disobeyed. Should anyone be killed, the leader was regarded almost in the same light as a willful murderer, and the kinsmen of the deceased warrior could demand redress. 622 721 [886]

Our main informant for the Thunderbird clan summarized the functions as follows: 622 614

The chief is chosen from one of the "greater" Thunderbird clans[1] and must be a man of well-balanced temper, not easily provoked, and of good habits. The one sacred object he possesses is his pipe. He must be a peacemaker and love all the people in the tribe, the little children included. [156]

If he saw a man, woman, or child passing by, he was to call them in and give them food to eat, for they were his brothers and sisters. All the relatives he has are to look after his possessions and keep him well supplied, for he was supposed to give away things constantly. If any person came to borrow some object from him, he would tell [431]

[1] He divided the Thunderbird clans into two groups, the real Thunderbird and the Warrior clans. This latter he insisted was identical with the thunderbirds who caused the rain and who were quite different from the other thunderbirds.

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787 778 [776] warpath)." The son therefore refused it, and went out to fast again. Then the spirits blessed him again and again he went to his father and asked to accompany him to the wilderness and see what blessings he had obtained. When they came to the wilderness [19] they found two wild cats (already stuffed) standing there and facing in opposite directions. Then the old man told his son again not to accept this blessing because it would be too powerful,[20] but the young man said, "This is the last blessing that I am going to get," and accepted it.

(What follows was obtained at a later time from the same informant and relating to the same blessing.)

The first blessing K'erex'u'sak'a received was from the Thunderbirds. They dropped a flute and two feathers from heaven. But these he refused. The second blessing was also from the Thunderbirds. This time they told him to go to a certain place where he could see them himself. He went there and found four men sitting there broiling meat. They gave him a piece of meat. It was only when he fasted for the fourth time that he was blessed with a warbundle.

WHAT G. OBTAINED IN HIS FAST

159 776 787 [775] I never fasted much. I only fasted three times and I don't believe that I ever fasted for more than two days at a time. However, I never was blessed with anything (i. e., any object). I knew, however, that I came from the home of the Thunderbirds (i. e., that I was a reincarnated Thunderbird). My spirit father and mother [21] were Thunderbirds. The Thunderbirds are beings whose glance can penetrate any object. For that reason I also can do it. For instance, I have seen a man through a tree. This I did once during a thunderstorm when a man had sought shelter behind a tree.

[19] Wherever the word "wilderness" is used all that is meant is an uninhabited place far away from the village.

[20] By "too powerful" the old man means that the feasts, offerings, etc., that would be necessary for so great a blessing would be quite beyond the means or the ability of the young man. It is to be remembered that the bestowal of a blessing does not in itself insure its efficacy, but that this can only be assured if the proper offerings and the proper emotional attitude accompany its subsequent use. Evidently the old man did not feel that the young fellow would be equal to the task. I have been told by many of the older Winnebagoes that when the old system was still intact the older people always made it a point to warn impetuous youths against taking upon themselves responsibilities that they might possibly not be able to fulfill, a very excellent device, it seems to me, for not multiplying the chances of failure and consequently the necessity of explaining them. However, one need not believe that this was the reason for their caution. [782] [686]

[21] He says "spirit father and mother" because when he lived with the Thunderbirds he was, of course, a spirit. It is quite impossible to determine whether he means that he was a human being who was living among the spirits as a spirit or whether he was a spirit who had desired to be once reincarnated as a human being. Originally, of course, there were no human beings, but only spirits, of whom a portion became permanently transformed into human beings. However, even very powerful shamans never claim more than three reincarnations, so that he can obviously not be referring to this primitive condition and is either referring to the fact that he is a Thunderbird residing temporarily on this earth, or—and this would be the more common form—a human being who lived for some time as a Thunderbird and then returned to earth. In the latter case one would expect him to obtain great blessings in his fast, and the fact that he did not and had nevertheless such great powers suggests that he is really a reincarnated Thunderbird. [776] [775]

Crashing Thunder

701 Now all this it would be well for you to obtain. Try to
* 159 be a leader of men. To become one, however, is very
867 difficult, the old people used to say. It may happen that
787 you merely pretend to be a leader of men, that you are but
a mere warrior in the ranks and yet take it upon yourself to
● [686] lead a war-party and thus cause a needless waste of life,
that you do what is called "throwing away a life." That
is the most shameful of all acts. The relatives of the person
[627] whom you have thus sacrificed would then have the right
to make you suffer, to torture you with burning embers.
And then your relatives would have to stand by, sad and
humiliated. Not with the blessing of one, not with the
blessings of twenty spirits, can you go on the warpath.
* 159 For that the blessings of all the spirits are necessary—those
867 on this earth, those under it and those who lie pinned
776 through it, the Island Weights; those in the waters and
787 those on the side of the earth, the winds, all four of them.
You need the blessings of the spirit who dispenses life from
one side of his body and death from the other, the bless-
ings of the Sun, the Moon, the Daylight, and the Earth.
All these Earthmaker has made controllers of war and by
787 all these must you be blessed in order to lead a war-party.
* 159 My son, if you cast off your dress for many people, that
867 is, if you give to the needy, your people will be benefited
[735] by your deeds. It is good thus to be honored by many
people. And even more will they honor you if you return
[554] victorious from the warpath with one of the four limbs, that
is, one of the four war honors. But if you obtain two, or
three, or perhaps even four limbs, then all the greater will
be the honor. Then whenever a war feast is given you will
receive part of the deer that is boiled, either part of its
ooo body or part of the head.[18] When on some other occasion,

[18] The meat of a deer at such a feast is given only to great warriors. The head is regarded as the choicest piece.